



“ALABAMA AGRICULTURE COUNTS”

Alabama News



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Press Release for 2002 Census of Agriculture - TO BE Released after 10 a.m. Central Daylight Time June 3

ALABAMA FARM NUMBERS CONTINUE TO DECLINE: NET RETURNS FOR MOST FARMS NEGATIVE

As farm numbers in Alabama continue to slip, the average net return realized by most farms in 2002 was in negative territory, according to the recently released 2002 Census of Agriculture by USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service. From 1997 to 2002, the number of farms in Alabama declined by 10% totaling just over 45,000 farms statewide in 2002. Land in farms during the same period fell 6% to just under 9 million acres in 2002. In 1997, 57% of all farms showed negative returns. Although somewhat improved in 2002, over half (54%) of all farms still spent more on the farming operation than they took in. In fact, Alabama farms with gross sales less than \$10,000 (71% of all farms) experienced negative returns, on average. On the bright side, farms showing gains in 2002 averaged \$54,657 per farm, which is a 50% increase per farm over 1997. Note: The net return numbers do not take into account fixed or long term expenses and asset values, only annual production expenses and gross sales of agricultural commodities during the year. Net cash farm income from the 2002 census operations includes the company value of livestock and poultry grown under production contracts. Beginning with the 2002 census, net cash farm income is calculated at both the **operation** level (includes company value of contracts) and the **operator** level (includes contractee value of contracts).

For more information on the complete Census of Agriculture report, please access the USDA/NASS web site at <http://www.nass.usda.gov/census/>.